

# Vegetable of the Month

## Tubers



Root vegetables are a commonly neglected bunch, but have recently taken some spotlight with increased emergence of international cuisine. Each root has its own unique taste and nutritional value, so be daring and expand your taste buds! This month's feature includes: Cassava (yuca root), Jicama, Sunchoke, Taro root, and Water chestnut.

### Varieties

#### Yuca Root

Yuca (also known as manioc or cassava), is a white, starchy tropical vegetable that widely grown and consumed in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. In many countries, yuca is a dietary staple usually eaten boiled, steamed, and in flour form as thickeners or additional ingredients for noodles, cakes, and pastries.



Yuca root has made a home growing in Florida since the late 1800s. Cassava is a bushy perennial that can grow as tall as 8 feet. The white interior of yuca is firmer than potatoes and has high starch content. Fresh yuca has thick, dark brown skin that resembles a tree's bark. Fresh yuca is available year round. Look for firm blemish free tubers. Store whole yuca as you would potatoes, in a cool, dark, dry place for up to one week. Peeled yuca covered with water and refrigerated or wrapped tightly and frozen for several months.

Yucca can easily be substituted for potatoes in soups and stews and it contains a high amount of vitamin C and carbohydrates. It is also a good source of dietary fiber and contains approximately 120 calories per 1 cup serving.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup raw slices (104g)	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 110	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 10mg	0%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 28g	9%
Dietary Fiber 4g	17%
Sugars 1g	
<b>Protein</b> 2g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 4%	Iron 2%

## Jicama



Jicama is a relative of the potato family. It is a popular dietary staple in Latin America and widely grown in Mexico and Central America. There are many names for Jicama including: the Mexican potato, Mexican yam bean, ahipa, saa got, Chinese turnip, lo bok, and the Chinese potato.

Jicama looks similar to a turnip or a large radish, and it can be used as an alternative to the water chestnut. Its skin is thin and can be gray, tan, or brown in color. Additionally, it has a short root and contains white flesh. The skin is typically peeled before eating it raw. Raw jicama tastes similar to a pear or apple. It also does not discolor when exposed to the open air for awhile. Because of this, raw jicama is often used as an accompaniment to raw vegetable platters. When jicama is used in cooking it tends to take on the flavors of the ingredients that it is being combined with. Therefore, jicama is a nice complement to various stir-fry dishes because it blends well with many vegetables and seasonings.

# Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup raw slices (120g)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 45      Calories from Fat 0

% Daily Value\*

Total Fat 0g      0%

Saturated Fat 0g      0%

Cholesterol 0mg      0%

Sodium 5mg      0%

Total Carbohydrate 11g      4%

Dietary Fiber 4g      15%

Sugars 3g

Protein 1g

Vitamin A 0%      •      Vitamin C 40%

Calcium 0%      •      Iron 4%

Jicama is a very versatile vegetable that contains a high amount of vitamin C, is low in sodium, and has no fat. One adult serving of jicama, which is equal to approximately 1 cup of cubed jicama or 120 grams, also contains only 45 calories.

Jicama is available year-round. When purchasing jicama, select tubers that are firm and have dry roots. Make sure that the jicama has an unblemished skin and that is not bruised. Once purchased, store jicama for up to two weeks in a plastic bag in your refrigerator.

## Sunchoke

A relative of the sunflower, this vegetable is native to America, not Jerusalem, and has no botanical relation to artichokes. In fact, these tubers are actually a member of the Sunflower family. The white flesh is nutty, sweet and crunchy like chestnuts when raw. Baked in their skins, they become more like potatoes with a mild taste of artichoke hearts.

The Jerusalem artichoke is widely grown in gardens in Texas and is harvested in the fall for highest quality. Widely available in supermarkets, its peak period is September through January, but often continues through the early spring.



Select firm sunchokes that are firm and free from mold and wrinkles. Sunchokes vary in color where their shades range from dark brown to light brown in color, similar to ginger.

These tubers need be refrigerated, unwashed, in a plastic bag for up to 1 week for successful storage.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup raw slices	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 110	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 5mg	0%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 26g	9%
Dietary Fiber 2g	10%
Sugars 4g	
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 10%
Calcium 2%	Iron 25%

## Taro Root



The taro root, as with other tubers is recognized by other names. This tuber is also known as dasheen, eddo and kalo in many areas of the world including West Africa, Asia, Central America, South America and the Caribbean and Polynesian islands. This root is most well-known as the ingredient of the Hawaiian dish "poi," or mashed taro root.

Taro root is a starchy vegetable that is commonly used in place of a potato. Its hairy outer coating on its surface is similar to a coconut. The hairy outer layer is always removed with caution since skin irritation can arise caused by the juices secreted by the taro root. It is recommended to use protective rubber gloves when handling this tuber. Taro root is toxic in its raw form so always cook it before eating.



Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup raw slices (104g)	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 110	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 10mg	0%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 28g	9%
Dietary Fiber 4g	17%
Sugars 1g	
<b>Protein</b> 2g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 4%	Iron 2%

These tubers take on a nut-like flavor when cooked. Frying, baking, roasting, boiling, or steaming them as an accompaniment to meat dishes are all common uses. Soups and stews are other dishes that taro root suits well. Taro roots provide a good source of fiber and supply approximately 110 calories per adult serving.

Select tubers that are firm, hairy, with no wrinkling. Store the roots for up to one week in a cool and dry location, making sure that the roots do not dry out.

## Water Chestnut

The water chestnut, resembles a chestnut in color and shape, is also known as the Chinese water caltrop. This tuber is commonly associated with Chinese cooking, but is finding its way into other ethnic meals.



Hailing from Southeast Asia, water chestnuts are actually roots of an aquatic plant that grows in freshwater ponds, marshes, lakes, and in slow-moving rivers and streams. These roots are commonly grown in Japan, Taiwan, China, Thailand, and sometimes in Australia. Water chestnut harvesting is laborious, making them somewhat expensive to purchase. Processed and canned water chestnuts widely found in most supermarkets. However, fresh water chestnuts, are more difficult to find, but are becoming more available.

If you find fresh water chestnuts, select those that are firm with no signs of wrinkling. These will need to be peeled prior to eating and cooking. Stored fresh tubers need to be wrapped tightly in a plastic bag for up to one week.

Canned, unopened water chestnuts will store indefinitely. Once opened, canned tubers will keep up to one week in a bowl of water. Be sure to change the water daily for the 'freshest' product.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 cup raw slices (124g)	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 130	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 15mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 30g	<b>10%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>15%</b>
Sugars 6g	
<b>Protein</b> 2g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 0%	Iron 0%

### Make Tubers Beans Part of Your 5 A Day Plan



- Add yucca with potatoes and other vegetables into beef, chicken, or vegetable-based soups and stews.
- Try eating jicama raw by including it into slaws or salads.
- Use jicama as a substitute for water chestnuts in all of your favorite recipes.
- Sunchokes make a delicious substitute in recipes that ask for water chestnuts or jicama.
- Add sliced sunchokes in marinated vegetable mixtures, or on an appetizer vegetable platter with dips.
- Add water chestnuts to all your stir-fries, salads, or any meals where you need a crunchy consistency.

## Recipes

### Stir Fry with Brown Rice

Makes 4 servings

Each serving is equal to one 5 A Day serving

Source: Produce for Better Health Foundation

- 1 lb scallops
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1 cup oyster mushrooms, whole
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water chestnuts, sliced
- 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 cloves garlic
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup low sodium chicken stock
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp light soy sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$  Tbsp ginger, fresh chopped
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 2 cups cooked brown rice



In a large, hot sauté pan add both oils and let heat for  $\frac{1}{2}$  minute. Continue adding: scallops or chicken, garlic, ginger, broccoli and celery. Sauté until  $\frac{1}{2}$  done, about 2-3 minutes. Add mushrooms, water chestnuts, soy sauce, and hot pepper. Let reduce to about  $\frac{1}{2}$  liquid volume. Serve immediately with rice.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 321, Protein 25g, Fat 9g, Calories From Fat 25%, Cholesterol 38mg, Carbohydrates 36g, Fiber 5g, Sodium 336mg.

## **Chinese Chicken with Water Chestnuts**

Makes 4 servings

Each serving is equal to one 5 A Day serving

Source: Produce for Better Health Foundation

1 Tbsp dry sherry  
3 Tbsp soy sauce  
1 tsp cornstarch  
3 Tbsp sesame oil  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
3 Tbsp chives, chopped  
1 Tbsp fresh ginger, slivered  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  lb chicken breast, cut in thin strips  
2 cups water chestnuts, peeled and sliced  
1 cup bamboo shoots, sliced

Mix sherry, soy sauce and cornstarch; set aside. Heat frying pan; add oil and heat thoroughly. Add garlic, chives, ginger, and bamboo shoots; stir-fry 1 minute. Add chicken to stir-fry and cook for 3 to 4 minutes or until light brown. Add water chestnuts and stir-fry 1 more minute. Add cornstarch mixture and stir for another minute or so. Serve immediately.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 181, Protein 16g, Fat 4g, Calories From Fat 22%, Cholesterol 33mg, Carbohydrates 19g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 451mg.



## **Simple Yucca Simmer**

Makes 4 servings

Each serving is equal to one 5 A Day serving

Source: Melissa's World Variety Produce Chef Ida Rodriguez

2 lb Yucca Root (1/2 pound per person)

2Tbsp lemon juice

2 cloves garlic chopped

2 Tbsp chives

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt

$\frac{1}{8}$  tsp ground black pepper

Rinse yucca well, peel and halve lengthwise. Remove fibrous core. Combine lemon juice, garlic and fresh herbs in a large pot with enough water to cover yucca. Bring to a boil and add salt. Lower heat and add cold water when necessary so as not to allow water to reach another boil. Pierce with toothpick or fork. When soft (not mushy) remove pieces and set aside. When all pieces are done, drain, sprinkle with pepper and serve hot.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 373, Protein 4g, Fat 1g, Calories From Fat 2%, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 88g, Fiber 5g, Sodium 269mg.

## **Jicama, Orange and Onion Salad**

Makes 4 servings

Each serving is equal to one 5 A Day serving

Source: Produce for Better Health

2 cups torn lettuce leaves

2 navel oranges, peeled and thinly sliced

4 red onions, thinly sliced

1 cup jicama, peeled and julienne-sliced

Dressing:

1/3 cup orange juice

½ tsp light olive oil or vegetable oil

1 Tbsp fresh cilantro, finely chopped

¼ tsp chili powder

In a large salad bowl, place torn lettuce. Cut orange slices into quarters; toss into lettuce with onion and jicama. For dressing, shake together all ingredients in a shaker jar; toss with salad.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 105, Protein 3g, Fat 1g, Calories From Fat 7%, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 24g, Fiber 6g, Sodium 11mg.

## **Taro Root and Chili Cakes**

Serves 6

Each serving is equal to one 5 A Day serving

Source: Melissa's World Variety Produce, Graham Kerr

- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  lbs taro root
- 1 tsp light olive oil
- 1 large onion (use Sweet Onion) finely diced
- 2 Jalapeno chili cored seeded and finely diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup egg substitute
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt
- 1 cup carrot grated
- 3 Tbsps Italian Parsley chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup all-purpose flour

Place the taro in a large steamer, cover, and steam for 30-40 minutes, or until very tender. Cover with cold water, then peel when cool enough to handle. Cut each taro root into several pieces and beat with an electric mixer until it has the consistency of smooth paste

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Warm the oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Sauté the onion and jalapenos until very soft but not browned, about 10 minutes.

Add the egg substitute, salt, carrot, and parsley to the taro paste. Add the onion mixture and combine well.

Cover a large plate with flour. Scoop about twelve  $\frac{1}{8}$ th cup balls of the taro mixture onto the plate and dust with flour. Using the palm of your hand, flatten each ball into a patty about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick. Lay the patties on a greased cookie sheet. Lightly coat the tops of the cakes with cooking spray and bake in the preheated oven for 10 minutes. Turn the patties and bake for 10 minutes more, or until golden brown.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 131, Protein 7g, Fat 2g, Calories From Fat 15%, Cholesterol 0mg, Fiber 3g, Sodium 273mg.

## **Quinoa Sunchoke Pilaf**

Makes 6 servings

Each serving is equal to one 5 A Day serving

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup quinoa

2 Tbsp olive oil

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped onion

$1\frac{1}{4}$  cup vegetable (or chicken) broth

1 cup chickpeas, cooked or canned, (drained and rinsed)

1 cup peeled, chopped sunchokes

1 cup peas, fresh or frozen

1 tsp pepper

Place the quinoa in a large bowl; fill with cold water. Pour into a strainer, then return the quinoa to the bowl and rinse 4 times more. Drain well.

Heat the oil in a 2-quart saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the rinsed quinoa and cook, stirring, until it cracks and pops, about 3 to 5 minutes. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until the onion is soft.

Add the vegetable broth and bring to a boil over high heat. Add the chickpeas, sunchokes, peas, and pepper, and return to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered, 20 minutes. Fluff with a fork. Serve.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 193, Protein 8g, Fat 4g, Calories From Fat 21%, Cholesterol 1mg, Fiber 5g, Sodium 52mg.

## **Sunchoke & Butternut Mash**

Serves 6

Each serving is equal to one 5 A Day serving

Source: Frieda's produce

2 lb butternut squash

1 lb sunchokes, scrubbed

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter

3 Tbsp skim milk

1 tsp orange peel, shredded

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt

$\frac{1}{8}$  tsp ground black pepper

3 navel oranges, sliced for garnish

Preheat oven to 375° F. Halve squash; place cut side down on a baking sheet along with whole sunchokes. Bake 45 to 50 minutes, or until vegetables are tender when pierced with a fork. (Or microwave quartered squash with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water for 8 to 10 minutes and sunchokes, sliced, in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water for 3 to 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  minutes.) Scoop seeds from squash cavity; scoop out pulp into a large bowl (if desired, leave squash shells intact to use as serving containers). Chop sunchokes (no need to remove peel); add to squash pulp. Add butter or margarine, milk or cream, and orange peel. Mash mixture on medium speed of electric mixer until blended; or process in food processor or blender in batches. Spoon into squash shells if desired; garnish with orange slices.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 200, Protein 4g, Fat 6g, Calories From Fat 23%, Cholesterol 13mg, Fiber 7g, Sodium 171mg.